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IDEAL, YET REAL

BY PHILIP G. HUBERT, JR.

With original illustrations by Hélène Gevers.



MME. HÉLÈNE GEVERS, whose work recalls that of Greuze in its dainty grace, is a Belgian artist as yet but little known in this country. At the World's Fair she had a small painting entitled "A Future Poet," and some of her less important pictures have found their way into private collections here; but considering the charm and freshness of Mme. Gevers' work, the American public is surprisingly ignorant of it.

I have mentioned Greuze in connection with Mme. Gevers, and no one can admire such a bit as that entitled "An Ideal Head" without feeling something of the charm with which the great idealist imbued his types of graceful girlhood. Such lovely heads as are here shown are ideal in truth, and yet very human. They are far from the mere fancy heads, all prettiness and nothing more, which some artists turn out with distressing facility. The famous remark concerning the value of easy writing, may to some extent be applied to painting, and in no department of the art more so than in the painting of pretty heads. In these lovely faces offered by Mme. Gevers we can see more than mere facility—a sympathy for spiritual beauty is everywhere evident.



AN IDEAL HEAD.



THE BROKEN BRANCH.

So far as one may judge by these pictures, the artist believes in real people rather than artistic conceits or fancies. These girls and children are very real and not poets' dreams. In "The Broken Branch" and in "Curiosity" there is a suggestion of incident, but nothing more. The lovely, somewhat mournful, face in the first-named picture, framed in its dark tresses, and its big hat forming a very latter-day halo, is full of the illusive sadness that comes into children's eyes, as if they knew the sorrow of the ages. If Mme. Gevers makes this ultra-modern Parisian



CURIOSITY.

hat do duty for a nimbus, she also makes her maiden a very living one, following Rossetti's lines :

" Fair shines the gilded aureole
In which our highest painters place
Some living woman's simple face."



LITTLE OF LIFE'S HARDSHIP DO FLOWERS AND CHILDREN KNOW.

She makes her maiden a sweet and living creature indeed, and not one of sentimental fancy, as is too often the case in paintings of this class.

"Curiosity" is something of a curiosity in the use which the artist makes of the hand-glass. The feat attempted is a difficult, almost impossible, one, and if it cannot be said that Mme. Gevers has been wholly successful, this fact must be borne in mind.